

Message Text

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C O N F I D E N T I A L WARSAW 0843

LIMDIS

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR, PL, GW

SUBJECT: POSSIBLE IMPLICATIONS OF BUDESTAG REJECTION OF GIEREK-SCHMIDT AGREEMENT

1. SUMMARY. A WELL-CONNECTED POLISH JOURNALIST TOLD AN EMBASSY OFFICER ON FEBRUARY 9, THAT, IF THE BUDESTAG FAILS TO RATIFY THE GIEREK-SCHMIDT AGREEMENT, PARTY FIRST SECRETARY GIEREK WILL BE IN TROUBLE DOMESTICALLY AND THERE WILL BE ADVERSE REPERCUSSIONS FOR DETENTE IN EUROPE. END SUMMARY.

2. PERSPEKTYWY EDITOR MARIAN PODKOWINSKI INVITED AN EMBASSY OFFICER TO LUNCH FEBRUARY 9 AND STATED BLUNTLY THAT BUNDESTAG REJECTION OF THE GIEREK-SCHMIDT AGREEMENT ON CREDITS AND EMIGRATION WOULD POSE A MAJOR SETBACK FOR GIEREK DOMESTICALLY AND CAUSE AN INTENSE ANTI-FRG CAMPAIGN TO BE WAGED BY POLAND THROUGHOUT WESTERN EUROPE AND ELSEWHERE. PODKOWINSKI STATED THAT GIEREK HAD ANTAGONIZED NUMEROUS INFLUENTIAL POLES BY HELPING FRG CHANCELLOR SCHMIDT AT HELSINKI. POLISH WAR VETERANS AND OTHERS WERE NOT AND ARE NOT SATISFIED WITH THE DEAL GIEREK STRUCK WITH SCHMIDT. IF THE BUDESTAG REFUSED TO RATIFY THE SOCIAL-SECURITY AGREEMENT, THIS WOULD BE
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A MAJOR DOMESTIC POLITICAL SETBACK FOR GIEREK WHICH

COULD WEAKEN HIS CONTROL OVER THE PZPR, IF NOT IMMEDIATELY, THEN IN THE NEAR FUTURE. SUCH A SETBACK WOULD PROVIDE A FOCAL POINT FOR THE NOW DISPARATE GROUPS WHICH ARE HOSTILE TO GIEREK WITHIN THE PZPR.

3. A REJECTION BY THE BUDESTAG WOULD BE FOLLOWED BY A PERIOD OF POLISH SILENCE DURING WHICH THE POLES WOULD WAIT AND LISTEN TO EXPLANATIONS BOTH FROM THE GOVERNMENT AND THE OPPOSITION IN GERMANY WHY THE AGREEMENTS WERE DEFEATED. IF THESE EXPLANATIONS WERE NOT ADEQUATE, THERE WOULD BE A POLISH DIPLOMATIC OFFENSIVE AIMED AT THE FRENCH AND OTHERS IN WESTERN EUROPE HAMMERING ON THE THEME THAT THE GERMANS WERE NOT INTERESTED IN RECONCILIATION WITH POLAND AND PRESENT A THREAT TO DETENTE IN EUROPE. GIEREK COULD NOT AVOID THIS, SINCE DEFEAT BY THE BUNDESTAG OF THE GIEREK-SCHMIDT AGREEMENT WOULD MAKE HIM VULNERABLE TO HIS CRITICS. MORE IMPORTANTLY, PODKOWINSKI SAID, GIEREK'S CONCEPT OF THE FUTURE OF SOCIALISM IN POLAND WOULD BE JEOPARDIZED.

4. WHEN ASKED WHO WOULD PROFIT THE MOST FROM A BUNDESTAG REJECTION OF THE AGREEMENT, PODKOWINSKI SAID POLITBIURO MEMBER JAN SZYDLAK. HE EXPLAINED THAT JAROSZEWICZ IS TOO OLD BUT THAT SZYDLAK IS YOUNG AND REALLY THE ONLY MAN ON THE POLITBIURO WHO HAS GIVEN THE SOVIETS SIGNS THAT HE IS WILLING TO REPRESENT THEIR INTERESTS. THE NEW CENTRAL COMMITTEE AND EXECUTIVE LEADERSHIP OF THE PZPR ELECTED AT THE SEVENTH PARTY CONGRESS ARE THE FIRST ABOUT WHICH THE SOVIETS DO NOT HAVE IN-DEPTH KNOWLEDGE. SZYDLAK SIGNALLED HIS AVAILABILITY TO THE SOVIETS BY VOLUNTEERING TO BECOME CHAIRMAN OF THE SOVIET-POLISH FRIENDSHIP SOCIETY. THE SOVIETS ARE BEGINNING TO BELIEVE THAT THEY CAN TRUST SZYDLAK AND ARE INCREASING THEIR CONTACTS WITH HIM.

5. COMMENT: PODKOWINSKI, WHO KNOWS WESTERN GERMANY WELL, WAS VERY CLEAR ABOUT THE MESSAGE HE WANTED TRANSMITTED. IT IS A DIRECT PLEA THAT WE ACT AS AN INTERMEDIARY TO ENSURE THAT THE GERMANS GO THROUGH WITH THE DEAL SCHMIDT MADE WITH GIEREK AT HELSINKI. DURING THE CONVERSATION, CONFIDENTIAL

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PODKOWINSKI STRESSED SEVERAL TIMES THAT HE HAS GOOD CONTACT WITH THE PZPR INNER CIRCLE AND THAT HE HAS SPOKEN TO SEVERAL VERY HIGHLY-PLACED LEADERSHIP MEMBERS IN THE LAST SEVERAL DAYS. WE BELIEVE THAT PODKOWINSKI'S VIEWS SHOULD BE TAKEN SERIOUSLY. END COMMENT.

6. RECOMMENDATION: I HOPE THAT WE ARE ALREADY USING OUR INFLUENCE WITH LEADERS OF THE CDU

(AND CSU) IN AN EFFORT TO PREVENT DEFEAT OF RATIFICATION. PODKOWINSKI'S MESSAGE IS PROBABLY ABOUT 70 PERCENT ACCURATE. WE HAVE STRONG DOUBTS ABOUT THE THREAT INVOLVING SZYDLAK; IT IS A BIT TOO PAT. NEVER, THELESS, THERE IS NO DOUBT AT ALL ABOUT THE CHAOTIC EFFECT ON POLISH-FRG RELATIONS, AND, PRESUMABLY, ON THE PROSPECTS FOR MAINTAINING A CONSTRUCTIVE EAST-WEST DIALOGUE, FOLLOWING DEFEAT OF THE SCHMIDT-GIEREK AGREEMENT. EMBASSY BONN AND THE DEPARTMENT ARE BETTER PLACED THAN WE TO DETERMINE WHAT ADDITIONAL STEPS WILL BE EFFECTIVE IN HELPING ACHIEVE RATIFICATION.

DAVIES

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